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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SE NATSIOS, NSC FOR
PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [SU](#) [CG](#) [UG](#) [CT](#)

SUBJECT: SPLA CLASHES WITH LRA ON THE BORDER OF CAR

REF: KHARTOUM 309

Classified By: Consul General Makila James, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) A Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) detachment came under attack March 1 from a group of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters at the border between Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR). One SPLA soldier was killed in the attack, and one wounded, according to SPLA Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Oyai Deng. Deng did not know what casualties were suffered by the LRA, a Ugandan rebel group that has long operated from southern Sudan and, more recently, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Deng also said he did not know whether LRA chief Joseph Kony is in CAR, Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The latest attack was unusual because LRA rarely engages organized military units, preferring to attack and loot civilian targets.

2. (C) The attack occurred between 9:00 and 11:00 p.m. at Source Yubu (identified on some maps as "South Yubu") on the Sudan/CAR border, according to Deng. The SPLA Chief of Staff told PolOff a "platoon" of about 35 SPLA soldiers deployed at the border area came under fire from a "company size" element of 50-100 LRA fighters. The SPLA platoon was attached to the Joint Integrated Units (JIU), Deng said, but no Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) elements participated in the fighting. Source Yubu is about 37 kilometers southwest of Tambura in Sudan's Western Equatoria State. The location is about 380 kilometers west of Juba, the capital of southern Sudan.

3. (C) Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) authorities had earlier closed roads between Tambura and the CAR border in response to LRA movements in the area (reftel). There are numerous reports over the last month of LRA movements from DRC into remote southwestern Sudan and CAR. A UN official who recently returned from Tambura told us confidentially that authorities there allege that the LRA are collaborating with nomadic Mbororo gunmen, and that the Mbororo may be receiving support from the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). The UN is attempting to defuse the situation by helping transport the Mbororo to other locations in southern Sudan. Another UN security official recently traveled to Raja in Western Bahr el-Ghazal State to investigate reports that the LRA had carried out "reconnaissance" activities in the area.

4. (C) The SPLA's account of the latest incident differed in some details from an account by the Minister of Information for Western Equatoria State, as cited in a Sudanese press report. The minister said two civilians died in the incident, and that LRA attackers briefly overran the town of Source Yubu. Both the minister and the SPLA Chief of Staff say fighting between the SPLA and the LRA lasted for two hours.

5. (C) The state minister also criticized GOSS for pursuing

peace talks between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (GOU). Officials from the three southern-most Sudanese states--Western, Central and Eastern Equatoria--voiced similar criticisms at a just-concluded conference in Torit (septel). GOSS Vice President Riek Machar, chief mediator in the stalled peace talks, told the conference he would persevere in efforts to re-start the talks. According to an observer at the conference, Machar's views were challenged by a wide range of officials, including the governors of all three states. SPLA leadership also express increasing frustration with the lack of progress in peace talks, and face pressures from local officials and the civilian population to take action against the LRA.

16. (U) In Juba, GOSS opened another conference March 2 to bring together ethnic Acholi leaders from Uganda, southern Sudan and the diaspora. Participants focused on the LRA problem and efforts to resume peace talks. Most LRA combatants, and most of their victims, are ethnic Acholi. The conference was due to end March 4.
POWERS